

It Was in September of 1976

Kunes, Steven

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

It was in December that I walked from my dormitory on Tenth Street to The Essex House on 59th Street. It seemed like a short walk since I was busy thinking of what I was going to do when I got there. What I did was call up to Buck Henry's room. I heard he was in town, working on the "Saturday Night Live" television program, and I wanted to find out what happened to the two characters at the end of "The Graduate". Henry co-wrote the screenplay, and I figured that he was therefore qualified to give me an answer. Buck was on his way to a meeting, but he did meet me in the lobby and speak with me as we walked. He said that if, indeed, I was similar to Ben, and Christ to Elaine, to contact Charles Webb -- because Webb not only wrote the novel, he lived much of it.

I asked [Dustin Hoffman] what he thought happened to Benjamin and Elaine after they rode away on the bus. He said he didn't know. Then, I asked if he might see [Chris], surprise her, at her dormitory, to say hello for just a few minutes. I knew this would do the trick. If Dustin Hoffman would do this, then there MUST be some substance to the theme of "The Graduate." I knew it would work, if only he would do it. I also knew the chance of this happening was a slim one, and that I was dreaming, but there I was talking with him, so why not? After months trying to get in touch with him, this was my only chance.

On Wednesday, September 13th, I spoke with Chloe. I learned that Hoffman had apparently called Chris at home, but she wasn't in at the time. He left his name and studio phone number. Her father, or somebody, must've read the phone message and called the studio, saying whoever made the call to stop the charade! I guess they didn't believe it was really Dustin Hoffman calling.

FULL TEXT

With the encouragement of well-known actor Dustin Hoffman, Steven Kunes wrote the following article and submitted it to the Reporter for publication. Those of our readers who saw the film "The Graduate" will well understand the parallels drawn by Mr. Kunes as he explains his quest for the girl he loves.

It was in September of 1976 that I first met Christine. I had come to New York University to study writing and literature. All the time we were together, I was fighting-off falling in love with her. In April of 1977, I lost the battle. Throughout that summer we were still seeing each other, but the relationship (a word I came to despise) began to decline: Chris was apparently receiving some outside pressure. After all, I am a writer; not the most practical profession.

Chris and I share much in common -- the important things. Anyone whose favorite word is "eep" has to be all right. We also share the same favorite movie and movie actor: "The Graduate" and Dustin Hoffman.

That fall, Chris remarked, as I was following her into a bank, that my persistence to remain involved with her was just like Benjamin Braddock's in "The Graduate".

It was in December that I walked from my dormitory on Tenth Street to The Essex House on 59th Street. It seemed like a short walk since I was busy thinking of what I was going to do when I got there. What I did was call up to Buck Henry's room. I heard he was in town, working on the "Saturday Night Live" television program, and I wanted to find out what happened to the two characters at the end of "The Graduate". Henry co-wrote the screenplay, and I figured that he was therefore qualified to give me an answer. Buck was on his way to a meeting, but he did meet me in the lobby and speak with me as we walked. He said that if, indeed, I was similar to Ben, and Christ to Elaine, to contact Charles Webb -- because Webb not only wrote the novel, he lived much of it.

In March I rode a train from Grand Central to Hastings-on-the Hudson, hoping to meet Charles Webb. I knew Webb lived in Hastings because I looked him up in Who's Who in America. Maybe this was my trip to Berkeley. When I arrived, a police officer directed me to his home.

I stood outside Webb's house for so long that I'm surprised I wasn't picked up by the cops. Finally I knew what had to be done, knocked on the front door -- and he answered. I told him I was referred by Buck Henry. We talked for almost an hour. Webb agreed to contact Chris, by writing her a letter. He said if I got no response from her within a week to give him a call. I gave him a call.

NEW DATE SET

Two weeks later, at the end of April, I received a phone call: Dustin Hoffman would like to see me. I was to call his office the first week of June. I did, and was told Hoffman could not see me until July.

Meanwhile, both Chris and I had graduated in June, I was working at a summer job and staying in an N.Y.U. dormitory. Chris was doing the same, but she was in a building down the street. I checked with the school's housing office, and found that she was scheduled to check out of her room on July 31st. Obviously she would return home to Connecticut. I hoped Hoffman would see me before then. I knew, as strange as it sounds, that if Hoffman saw me in time, everything would work out. After all that had already transpired, I had to be optimistic, to hope for something. On Thursday, July 27th, at 12:30 at night, I was awakened by the telephone. It was Chloe, from Dustin Hoffman's office. Dustin would meet me the following day in the lobby of the MGM Building at 9:45 a.m.!

I was thirty minutes early. Each time the door opened I was sure it would be him. After a while, a young woman walked up to me. It was Chloe. I was led into the waiting area of the Magno Sound Studio, where there was to be some sort of screening. People began to arrive. Sam Jaffe, Robert Benton, Gail Strickland -- all people involved with Hoffman's new film, "Kramer vs. Kramer."

Then, Dustin Hoffman stepped through the door, fifteen minutes late. Talk about shitting bricks. Never again would I want to experience the feeling I had then when I saw him. He sat down next to me, looking very serious, and asked what he could do. I did my best to brief him in five minutes about a situation which had taken almost two years to develop.

I showed him a paper plate with "Congratulations Graduate" printed on it, a souvenir from the party my family threw for me in June. (It was there that I was approached by a relative and urged to become a court stenographer -- a "wide open field.")

I asked Dustin what he thought happened to Benjamin and Elaine after they rode away on the bus. He said he didn't know. Then, I asked if he might see Chris, surprise her, at her dormitory, to say hello for just a few minutes. I knew this would do the trick. If Dustin Hoffman would do this, then there MUST be some substance to the theme of "The Graduate." I knew it would work, if only he would do it. I also knew the chance of this happening was a slim one, and that I was dreaming, but there I was talking with him, so why not? After months trying to get in touch with him, this was my only chance.

He said, "Is tomorrow morning at nine o.k.?"

I met him on the corner of 74th and Madison at nine o'clock sharp. He got his newspapers, and then we took a taxi downtown.

CHRIS CANNOT BE LOCATED

In the lobby of Chris' dormitory, I rang up to her room. No one answered. So I called her private number from a toll phone. Again, no one was there. I then proceeded to lose my only dime trying to call Lee, one of Chris' girlfriends. I was so nervous I dialed the wrong number. I had to borrow a dime from Dustin to try again, hoping to find where Chris had gone. She's always in in the mornings, but not this time. Lee wasn't home either. Finally the desk clerk informed me that Chris had left for Connecticut.

Never have I felt worse than I did that morning. Never have I had my hopes up so high and then watched them shatter in front of me so quickly. HERE I AM WITH DUSTIN HOFFMAN, IN CHRIS' DORMITORY LOBBY -- AND SHE ISN'T THERE!!!!

Dustin felt so badly for me, he said, "We're going to do this thing again. Nothing good comes easy."

As it turned out, much to my surprise, Chris was going to return to the city in two weeks, and remain there for another two. Here was my chance!

Dustin was out of town the first week Chris arrived. That left me only one week to set things up. When he returned, he was rehearsing heavily for his upcoming film, which was scheduled to be shot in less than two weeks. His time available for anything but work was at a minimum. It became impossible for him to travel downtown, at least in time to see Chris. I had to bring Chris to him, at the 54th Street studio he was working at.

I had to work out some sort of a plan to get Chris there. I developed one, all ready to put into action, but on August 29th, one day before my appointment with Hoffman, Chris moved home to Connecticut.

Again I had failed. I went to the studio the following day -- alone. I told Dustin what happened. He took down her phone number in Connecticut and said he would call her. He also said if it were not for the film he was working on, he would've driven up to Connecticut to see Chris that day!

On Wednesday, September 13th, I spoke with Chloe. I learned that Hoffman had apparently called Chris at home, but she wasn't in at the time. He left his name and studio phone number. Her father, or somebody, must've read the phone message and called the studio, saying whoever made the call to stop the charade! I guess they didn't believe it was really Dustin Hoffman calling.

So, Christine, if you are reading this, then....

DETAILS

Ethnicity:	European/Eastern European
Publication title:	Armenian Reporter International (1967-1988); Paramus, N.J.
Volume:	XII
Issue:	9
Pages:	4
Number of pages:	0
Publication year:	1978
Publication date:	Dec 21, 1978
Publisher:	Armenian Reporter
Place of publication:	Paramus, N.J.
Country of publication:	United States, Paramus, N.J.
Publication subject:	Ethnic Interests, European/Eastern European
ISSN:	10741453
Source type:	Newspaper
Language of publication:	English

Document type: News

Accession number: SFLNSARRP1278ARJS002003635

ProQuest document ID: 371406912

Document URL: <https://login.udel.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/was-september-1976/docview/371406912/se-2?accountid=10457>

Copyright: Copyright Armenian Reporter Dec 21, 1978

Last updated: 2010-06-23

Database: Ethnic NewsWatch

LINKS

[Linking Service](#)

Database copyright © 2023 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)